

Fr. Colin Poston

February 28, 2016

It is ironic, one might say, that this story of “the woman at the well” as it is commonly called, at no point finds a thirsty Jesus or the woman taking a drink of the water in Jacob’s well [even though Jesus’ first words to the Samaritan woman are “Give me a drink.”] There are all kinds of things that seem to be “wrong” here. There’s a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman: alone, just the two of them. The woman is a “broken soul” one might say: she has had relationships with several men- and Jesus even points that out to her. And now here is another strange man talking to her, alone... *what does he want?*

But instead of running away from Jesus, she continues to speak to him... and *listen to him*. Perhaps the new well is not the one she is standing in front of now: the *new well is her heart*. And Jesus is gently dropping his bucket down into it... to draw out a desire for a new “water...” Something brand new, that will last forever and never have her thirsty again, once she has it!

*“It” is God... “it” we find, is Jesus himself. “It” is a relationship with true love, and a mercy that heals and restores and suddenly gives new life! Today, “it...” is the water of Baptism, where our relationship with God first began.*

This Gospel passage always reminds me of two things: first, the words of St. Augustine, who in his autobiography of his conversion, called the “Confessions,” wrote those famous words:

***“O God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.” St. Augustine was a great example, one of many in the lives of the saints, who experienced the “restlessness”: he tried to find all other kinds of satisfaction to slake his “thirst”: women, intellectual knowledge, fame, vanity, and philosophical pride. None of them were satisfactory to him. His thirst was quenched when he found Jesus... I dare say, waiting for him at the well. Waiting... and finally the dialogue began. He found the true water... even more than he ever wanted!***

To conclude, I also think of the words one finds next to the Crucifix in every one of Mother Teresa’s sisters’ chapels.

The words, in large lettering, say: “**I thirst for souls.**” Isn’t it amazing? That as much as you and I and the woman desire the living water: *He thirsts for our soul even more?*